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PREFACE.

IF some shadow of regret is caused by the reflection that another year has passed away since the Editor indited a Preface to 'The Zoologist,' there is at least this consolation to be found that the year has not been spent idly. Many workers have been busy in the field of Zoology, and the result of their labours and investigations has been generously communicated to this Journal to afford pleasure and instruction to others. Indeed on glancing over the Index to the annual volume, the Editor feels that he has good cause to be grateful to the many correspondents who have favoured him with communications during the past year. In almost every branch of Zoology some contribution to knowledge has been made.

In the case of MAMMALS, Mr. A. H. Cocks has given an interesting account of the result of his enquiries in Norway concerning the survival of the Beaver in that country, an account rendered all the more valuable from the regrettable fact that the extinction of this animal in Europe cannot be very far distant. The same contributor's remarks on the question of the specific identity of the Ferret and Polecat will be acceptable to those still sceptical on the subject.

There is still much to be learnt concerning the distribution of the smaller British mammals, and such items of intelligence as those communicated by Mr. D'Urban on the Red Field Vole in Devonshire (p. 487), Mr. Rope on the Harvest Mouse in Suffolk (p. 57), and Messrs. Chichester Hart, Cordeaux, and Parker on the occurrence of the Pine Marten in their respective districts are always welcome.

Comparatively few observers are so situated as to have opportunities of studying the Marine Mammalia, and hence such observations as those on the Great Grey Seal by Mr. Warren (p. 358) and on the White-beaked Dolphin by Mr. Southwell (p. 220) are the more acceptable.

As regards BIRDS, numerous interesting communications have been received during the past year, amongst which some half-dozen especially deserve mention, namely, the Report on Migration by Messrs. Harvie Brown and Cordeaux (pp. 161—204), Mr. Howard Saunders' account of the habits of the Skuas as observed in Shetland (p. 1), Mr. Chichester Hart's Notes on the Ornithology of the British Polar Expedition, 1875-6 (pp. 121, 204), Mr. Seebohm's papers on the habits of the Marsh Warbler (p. 377), and nesting of the Spoonbill (p. 457). The occurrence of the Needle-tailed Swift for the second time in England, of which so pleasing an account (with a figure of the bird) has been given by Mr. Corbin (p. 81), is too remarkable to pass unnoticed, while many others might be mentioned which bear testimony to the careful attention which is being paid to Ornithology in various parts of the kingdom.

On REPTILES at least one communication has appeared (p. 408); more would have been welcome.

On the subject of FISHES, Dr. Day has favoured us with several interesting and valuable papers, such as those "On the Air-bladders of Fish" (p. 97), "On the Origin of Varieties in *Salmonidae*" (p. 133), and "The Fresh-water Fishes of India" (pp. 431, 461); while Messrs. D'Urban, Gatcombe, and Cornish have recorded the capture of several rare or little-known fishes on the sea-board of Devon and Cornwall. Mr. Carrington's position as Naturalist at the Westminster Aquarium has enabled him to supply some interesting notes at various times on rare British CRUSTACEA and RADIIATA (as at p. 72); nor have the MOLLUSCA (pp. 222, 367) or the ANELIDES (p. 409) been uncared for.

It is thus pleasant to find workers in so many branches of Zoology communicating so agreeably the results of their researches. From the increasing interest which is being manifested in the study of Natural History, the Editor is induced to hope that he may long continue to receive such interesting articles as those with which he has been favoured during the past year—articles which establish such pleasant relationship with the writers, and so agreeably lighten the task of editing.

J. E. H.

CONTENTS.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS.

- ALLISON, M.
Corn Crake carrying its young, 111
- APLIN, OLIVER V.
Peregrine Falcon and Curlew in Oxfordshire, 142; Rare birds in Oxfordshire, 259; Spotted Flycatcher near Banbury, 447; The Polecat in North Oxfordshire, 508
- BACKHOUSE, J., JUN.
Skuas in Yorkshire, 21
- BECHER, Lieut. E. F., R.A.
Subcutaneous worms in Red-backed Shrike, 487
- BENSON, Rev. CHARLES W., LL.D.
Snow Bunting at Cromer in May, 301; Blackcap in Co. Meath, 488
- BEVINGTON, A.
Subcutaneous worms in Peregrine Falcon, 515
- BOOTH, E. T.
Gannets breeding in confinement, 363
- BORRER, WILLIAM, M.A., F.L.S.
Immigration of the Long-eared Owl, 140; Great Skua at Brighton, 143; Testacella haliotidea in Sussex, 222
- BRANDER, Capt. J. DUNBAR
Woodcock carrying its young, 65
- BRITTEN, JAMES, F.L.S.
Popular names of animals, 113
- BROWN, JOHN A. HARVIE, F.Z.S.
On the decrease in Scotland of the Greater Spotted Woodpecker, 85; Wild Cat and other rarer indigenous Mammals of Scotland, 251; Green Woodpecker in Somerset, 256; Birds' feathers coming off in winter, 298; Rare birds and the autumnal migration, 485
- BROWN, J. A. HARVIE, & JOHN CORDEAUX
Report on the migration of birds in the autumn of 1879, 161; Correction of error, 257
- BRUNTON, THOMAS
Wildfowl at Larne, Co. Antrim, 107
- BURNAY, Rev. HENRY, M.A.
Siskin nesting in Bedfordshire, 259
- CAMBRIDGE, Rev. O. P., M.A., C.M.Z.S.
Peregrine Falcon on Salisbury Cathedral spire, 300
- CARRINGTON, JOHN T., F.L.S.
Northern Stone Crab, Knotty Cushion Starfish, 72; Greenland Bullhead at Brighton and Southend, 147
- CARROW, Rev. M.
Hoopoe near Basingstoke, 298
- CHAMBERS, C.
Shore birds in East- and Mid-Lothian, 69; The Great Shearwater: its posture while at rest, 110
- CHASE, ROBERT W.
Little Gull, Fulmar Petrel, Avocet, and Shearwaters, 71
- CHRISTY, ROBERT M.
Great Bustard in Essex, 296; The Shell Slug in Sussex, 367
- CLARK-KENNEDY, ALEX., F.L.S., F.Z.S.
Scarcity of Golden Plover in South of Scotland, 66; Black-winged Stilt near Eastbourne, 300
- CLARKE, WILLIAM EAGLE
Ornithological notes from Yorkshire, 353; Nidification of the Reed Warbler, 444
- CLERMONT, Rt. Hon. Lord
Woodcock carrying its young, 258
- CLIFTON, Lord
Hobby nesting in Essex, 259; Hoopoes in Sussex and Kent, 299
- COCKS, ALFRED HENEAGE, F.Z.S.
The Beaver in Norway, 233, 497; White Badger in Hampshire, 252; The Ferret and the Polecat, 396
- CORBIN, G. B.
Habits of the Stoat, 54; On the occurrence of the Needle-tailed Swift for the second time in England, 81; Wagtails gregarious at roosting time, 107; Peregrine Falcon in Hampshire, 141
- CORDEAUX, JOHN
Ornithological notes from North Lincolnshire in the autumn of 1879, 8; On the recent occurrence of the Pine Marten in Lincolnshire, 237; Migration of the Redbreast, 363; Call-note of the young Guillemot and Razorbill, 402; Migration on the East coast of England in the autumn of

CONTENTS.

- 1880, 486; Bee-eater, Grey Phalarope and Tengmalm's Owl in Lincolnshire, 511; King Eider at the Farne Islands, 514
- CORDEAUX, JOHN, & J. A. HARVIE BROWN Report on the migration of birds in the autumn of 1879, 161; Correction of error, 257
- CORNISH, THOMAS Late stay of Pilchards and early arrival of Mackarel on the Cornish coast, 112; Unusual assemblage of the Masked Crab, 262; Short-finned Tunny at Penzance, 366; Porpoises chasing Mackarel, 443; Lesser Grey Mullet on the Northumberland coast, 448; Eckstrom's Topknot and Couch's Erythrinus on the Cornwall coast, 449
- Cox, H. L. Breeding of the Pochard and Scaup in Ireland, 255
- CRICHTON, ARTHUR W., F.L.S., F.Z.S. Unusual migration of Jays, 71
- CURTIS, E. Peregrine Falcon near Windsor, 70
- DAY, FRANCIS, F.L.S., F.Z.S. On the air-bladders of fish, 97; The Hebridal Argentine, 112; The origin of varieties in Salmonidae, 133; The Houting on the Sussex coast, 146; Greenland Bullhead at Brighton, 148; Scomber punctatus on the Cornish coast, 303; On the change of colour in the Boar-fish, and the growth of the Turbot, 383; Notes on the freshwater fishes of India, 431, 461
- DOMBRAIN, H. A. Great Bustard in Kent, 110; Habits of the Kentish Plover, 138
- D'URBAN, W. S. M., F.L.S. Goosander on the Exe, 68; The Maigre, or Shade-fish, off the Devonshire coast, 449; Red Field Vole in Devonshire, 487
- DURNFORD, W. A. Ornithological notes from North Lancashire, 241
- FELDEN, Capt. H. W., C.M.Z.S. Mammals and birds from Port Leopold, 482
- FELLOWES, ARTHUR American Green-winged Teal in Hampshire, 70
- FLEMING, WILLIAM W. Lesser Terns breeding on the Wicklow coast, 26; Heronries in Ireland, 514
- FRIEDEL, ERNST A German view of the Fauna of Ireland, 293, 343, 388
- GARRICK, G. T. Natural-History notes from Lerwick, 302
- GATCOMBE, JOHN Skuas off the coasts of Devon and Cornwall, 21; Ornithological notes from Devon and Cornwall, 46, 247; Supposed breeding of the Scaup in Ireland, 142; The Eagle Ray off Plymouth, 262; Blue eggs of the Cuckoo, 400; Spoonbill in Cornwall, 513
- GOSDEN, FRANK Food of sea-fishes: Whiting and Whiting-pout, 304
- GUNN, T. E. Ornithological notes from Norfolk and Suffolk, 49
- GUNTHER, A. C. L. G., M.A., M.D., F.R.S. Address to the Biological Section of the British Association, 417
- GURDOW, E. J. White Stoot, 104
- GURNEY, J. H., JUN., F.Z.S. Ornithological notes from Lowestoft, 22; Late nesting of the Barn Owl and Waterhen in Norfolk, 71; Bewick's Swan in Norfolk, 139; Herons nesting at Hempstead, Norfolk, 366; Golden-eye Duck and Green Sandpiper in Norfolk in July, 404; The autumn migration of birds at Cromer, 510; The trachea of the Spoonbill, 514
- HADFIELD, Capt. HENRY Ornithological notes from the Isle of Wight, 109; Nesting habits of the Starling, 366; Nesting of Montagu's Harrier, 404
- HAMILTON, EDWARD, M.D., F.L.S. Ornithological notes from S.W. Sutherland, 502; Rookeries in London, 515
- HARGITT, EDWARD Occurrence of the Hen Harrier in London, 108
- HART, EDWARD Great Bustard in Dorsetshire, 110; Rough-legged Buzzards in Wiltshire, 143
- HART, HENRY CHICHESTER, B.A., F.L.S. Pine Marten in Ireland, 18; Notes on the Ornithology of the British Polar Expedition (1875-6), 121, 204; Supposed occurrence of the Tawny Owl in Ireland, 255; Blackcap in Ireland, 512
- HART, HERBERT PASSINGHAM Crested Lark in Cornwall, 306; Whinchat in Cornwall, 407; Pied Flycatcher at the Lizard, 448; Avocet in Cornwall, 487
- HARTING, J. E., F.L.S., F.Z.S. Brood of White Swallows, 24; Great Bustard in Jersey, 25; Virginian Colin in Norfolk, 26; Large-headed Cod at the mouth of the Thames, 26; Animal Sounds, 54; a Pom-

- peian Bird Shop, 60; Reported discovery of the eggs of the Curlew Sandpiper, 104; Rooks in the Temple Gardens, 143; Great Bustard in Essex: correction of an error, 144; Banks' Oar-fish near Whitby, 145; Trout in the Thames, 146; Hunting the Wild Cat, 251; The Great Bustard in France during the winter 1879-80, 252; Attempted domestication of the Great Bustard, 254; Red-legged Partridge in Guernsey, 257; Common Scoter in Cambridgeshire, 258; Hawks and Hawking, 273; "Wariangle" and "Nynmurder," names for the Butcher Bird, 300; Dr. Lambe's Ornithologia Bercheria, 313; Bird life in Tchuski-land, 364; Sale of Great Auks' Eggs, 365; Greenland Falcon in the Co. Donegal, 406; On the period and intervals at which the Common Lizard casts its skin, 408; Spread of disease by the agency of Earthworms, 409; The Wild Birds Protection Act, 1880, 437; The Beaver in Norway, 443; Young Polar Bears at the Zoological Society's Gardens, 483; Bartram's Sandpiper in Lincolnshire, 508; Model of the Great Auk, 516
- HOOK, BRYAN**
Grey Phalarope near Kingsbridge, Devon, 515
- HOWARD, ROBERT J.**
Rough-legged Buzzards near Blackburn, 488
- JESSE, W., F.Z.S.**
Dipper returning to its old nest, 406
- KELLY, REGINALD**
Note on the Cuckoo, 400
- KERMODE, PHILIP M. C.**
Cuckoos denuded of feathers, 257
- KERRY, F.**
Rare birds at Harwich, 69; Singing power of the Great Grey Shrike, 70
- KING, J.**
Scarcity of Fieldfares, 71; Singular death of a Blue Titmouse, 144
- LANGTON, HERBERT**
The trachea of the Spoonbill; Shore Lark near Brighton, 488
- LILFORD, Right Hon. Lord, F.L.S., F.Z.S.**
White-fronted Goose in Northamptonshire, 66; Solitary Snipe in Northamptonshire, 444
- MANSELL-PLEYDELL, J. C., F.L.S.**
Curious accident to a Hare, 56
- MATHEW, Rev. MURRAY A., M.A., F.L.S.**
Pomatorhine Skuas in the Bristol Channel, 20; Birds and the weather, 69; Unusual abundance of the Green Woodpecker in Somersetshire, 140; Chiffchaff remaining in England during the winter, 144
- MATTHEWS, Rev. A., M.A.**
Nesting of the Woodcock, 63; On the cry of the White and Brown Owls, and the song of the Redwing, 379
- MILLER, H., JUN.**
Unusual number of eggs in a Thrush's nest, 259
- MITFORD, ROBERT H., F.Z.S.**
Siskins nesting in Bedfordshire, 364
- MORE, A. G., F.L.S.**
The Blue Thrush erroneously recorded as a straggler to Ireland, 67; Does the Long-eared Owl hoot? 487
- MURTON, JAMES**
Woodcock nesting in Lancashire, 302
- NELSON, T. H.**
Extraordinary arrival of Skuas on the Yorkshire coast, 18; Gulls ejecting pellets, 362; Buffon's Skua, 365; Cormorant with white feathers in the tail, 366; Pomatorhine Skua on the Durham and Yorkshire coasts, 511
- NICHOLLS, HENRY**
American Green-winged Teal in Devon, 70; Avocet in South Devon, 486
- NORGATE, FRANK**
On the nesting of the Nuthatch as observed in Norfolk, 41; Cuckoo denuded of feathers, 298
- PARKER, CHARLES A., M.D.**
Three-legged Magpie, 71; Ornithological notes from West Cumberland, 109; American Swan in Scotland, 111; Pine Marten in Cumberland, 219; Iceland Gull and other seabirds in West Cumberland, Variety of the Starling, 221; Bittern in West Cumberland, 222
- PRIOR, C. MATTHEW**
Pomatorhine Skua and other birds in Bedfordshire, 108; Stock Doves breeding in Magpies' nests, 143; Peregrine Falcon in Bedfordshire, 221
- RAINES, WALTER**
Badger and Polecat near Leeds, 251; Unusual nest of eggs of the Waterhen, 299; Unusual nesting-place of the Wheatear, 301; Nesting of Montagu's Harrier near York, 362; Crossbill breeding near York, 403; Hawfinch breeding near Leeds, 404; Turtle Dove breeding near York, 405; Nesting of Montagu's Harrier, 445; Dipper returning to its old nest, 448; Great Crested Grebe near Leeds, 514; Varieties of common birds, 516
- RAWSON, H. E.**
Occurrence of the Alpine Swift in Devonshire, 108
- REID, Capt. SAVILE J., R.E., F.Z.S.**
A strange nesting community, 301

- RODD, EDWARD HEARLE**
The large russet variety of the Common Snipe, 23; Early assumption of summer plumage in the Black-headed Gull, 106
- ROPE, G. T.**
Harvest Mouse in Suffolk, 57; Snow Bunting, Spotted Crake, and Bittern at Leiston, 68; Late nesting of the Nightjar, 406
- SAUNDERS, HOWARD, F.L.S., F.Z.S., &c.**
On the Skuas and some other birds observed in the Shetland Islands, 1; The Skua Gulls and their recent migration, 90; The young of the Ivory Gull, 484
- SEEBOHM, HENRY, F.Z.S.**
Blue eggs of the Cuckoo, 361; Field notes on the Reed and Marsh Warblers, 377; A visit to the colony of Spoonbills near Amsterdam, 457
- SERVICE, ROBERT**
Starlings *v.* Sky Larks, 403; Variety of the Spotted Flycatcher's eggs, 405; Breeding of the Shoveller in the Stewarty of Kirkeudbright, 406
- SIM, GEORGE**
Esquimaux Curlew in Kincardineshire, 515
- SIMPSON, MARTIN**
White's Thrush near Whitby, 68
- SIZER, CARRINGTON FRANCIS**
Hoopoe near Chichester, 299
- SMITH, Rev. ALFRED CHARLES, M.A.**
Two species of birds laying in the same nest, 59; Immigration of Long-eared Owls in Wiltshire, 106; The colour of Cuckoos' eggs, 399
- SMITH, CECIL, F.L.S.**
Pomatorhine Skuas in Somersetshire, 19; Long-eared Owls in Guernsey, 220; Green Woodpecker in Somerset, 221; Red-legged Partridge in Guernsey, 397
- SMOTHY, C.**
Great Bustard in Essex, 26
- SOUTHWELL, THOMAS, F.Z.S.**
On the occurrence of the Deal-fish on the Norfolk coast, 15; White-beaked Dolphin, 220; Tenacity of life in young House Martins, 401; Average date of arrival of the Cuckoo in England, 447
- SPILLER, MARTIN**
Little Bustard at Eastbourne, 110
- SPURLING, J.**
Manx Shearwater inland, 144
- STEVENSON, HENRY, F.L.S.**
Ornithological notes from Norfolk for 1878 and 1879, 325
- STEWART, ALEX., F.S.A. Scot., F.C.S., &c.**
Wild Cat in the West Highlands, 218
- TEGETMEIER, W. B., F.Z.S.**
Desfontaine's 'Birds of Barbary,' 405
- TOMLINSON, H. G.**
Ornithological notes from Orkney, 297
- TOMLINSON, W. J.**
Migration of Woodcocks and Snipe, 65
- TRAVIS, T.**
Great Bustard in Essex and Cambridgeshire, 110
- TUCK, Rev. JULIAN G., M.A.**
Gannet at Llanberis, 363; The cliffs at Flamborough, 365
- VAUGHAN, JOHN**
Ornithological notes from Guernsey, 360
- VAUGHAN, M.**
Martins in December, 72; Woodcock breeding in Hertfordshire, 301
- WARREN, ROBERT**
Ornithological notes from the County Mayo, 129; Great Grey Seal in Killala Bay, Co. Mayo, 358; On the cry of the White Owl, 446; Early arrival of Widgeon in the Moy Estuary, 448
- WEST, L. H.**
Nesting of the Nightingale in East Yorkshire, 406; Alpine Swift in Yorkshire, 407
- WHARTON, C. BYGRAVE, F.Z.S.**
On the nesting of the Common Wren, 142
- WHARTON, HENRY T., F.L.S., F.Z.S.**
On a Parrot performing a surgical operation on living Sheep, 57
- WHITAKER, J.**
Breeding of the Tufted Duck in Nottinghamshire, 141
- WHITE, E. A.**
Black Redstart in Co. Waterford, 221
- WHITE, H.**
Great Shrike, Raven, and Goosander in the West of England, 144
- WHITMAN, C. O.**
On the flight of the Flying Fish, 471
- WIDDAS, GEORGE A.**
Nesting of Montagu's Harrier, 512; Crossbills breeding near York, 515
- YOUNG, J., F.Z.S.**
Siskins breeding in confinement, 61

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF SUBJECTS.

- Accipitres, 287
 Acclimatisation of Waterfowl, 359
 Air-bladders of fish, 97
Alauda arvensis, 166, 177
Alea arra, 211
 " *torda*, 212
 Anatidae, 183
 Animal sounds, 54
 Animals, popular names of, 113
 Animals, Vertebrated, a List of the, now or lately living in the Gardens of the Zoological Society' (review), 160
 Ants, Bees, and Wasps, observations on, 410
Ardea cinerea, 167
Argentine, Hebridal, 112, 223.
 'Ascent of the Matterhorn' (review), 78
 Auk, Great, sale of eggs of, 365; model of the, 516.
 " Little, 53, 212, 340
 Autumnal migration, 485, 486
Avocet, 71; in South Devon, 486; in Cornwall, 487
 Badger near Leeds, 251; white, in Hampshire, 252
 Bears, Polar, young at the Zoological Society's Gardens, 483
 Beaver, on the extinction of the, in Livonia, 215; in Norway, 233, 443, 497
 Bee-eater in Lincolnshire, 511
 Bees, Ants, and Wasps, observations on, 410
 'Belfast Lough,' Patterson's (review), 372
 Bell, Mr., of Selborne, death of, 148, 224
Bercheria, *Ornithologia*, 313
Bernicla brenta, 168, 214
 Bird-life in Tchuski-land, 364
 'Bird-Life, Glimpses of' (review), 494
 Bird-shop, a Pompeian, 60
 Birds' feathers coming off in winter, 298
 Birds, two species of laying in the same nest, 59; shore, in East- and Mid-Lothian, 69; rare, at Harwich, 69; and the weather, 69; and mammals introduced into New Zealand, 116; of Yorkshire, 144; report on the migration of, in the autumn of 1879, 161; unknown, 200; rare, in Oxfordshire, 259; colour sense in, 407; from Port Leopold, 482; rare, and the autumnal migration, 485; autumn migration of at Cromer, 510; common, varieties of, 514
 'Birds, British, Yarrell's History of' (review), 485
 Birds, Fishes, and Cetacea commonly frequenting Belfast Lough' (review), 372
 Birds found in Europe and North America, a Comparative Catalogue of' (review), 416
 Birds of Cornwall and the Scilly Islands' (review), 374
 Birds of Nottinghamshire, a Descriptive List of the' (review), 374
 'Biologia Centrali-Americanana' (review), 76
 Bittern, 52, 336, 340; at Leiston, &c; in West Cumberland, 222
 Blackbird, 165, 174, 193
 Blackcap in Co. Meath, 488; in Ireland, 512
 Boar-fish, change of colour in the, and the growth of the Turbot, 383
 Breeding of the Tufted Duck in Nottinghamshire, 141; supposed, of the Scaup in Ireland, 142, 245; of Woodcock in Hertfordshire, 301; of Gannet in confinement, 363; of Crossbill near York, 403; of Hawfinch near Leeds, 404; of Turtle Dove near York, 405; of the Shoveller in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, 406
 Brewer, the late Dr. T. M., 115
 'Bright Feathers; or, some North-American Birds of Beauty' (review), 495
 British Association, Address to the Biological section of, 417
 Bullhead, Greenland, at Brighton and Southend, 147; at Brighton, 148
 Bunting, Black-headed, 336
 " Lapland, 126
 " Snow, 68, 124, 178, 195; at Cromer, in May, 301
 Bustard, Great, in Cornwall, 25; in Jersey, 25; in Essex, 26, 296; in Dorsetshire, 110; in Essex and Cambridgeshire, 110; correction of an error, 144; in France during the winter 1879-80, 252; attempted domestication of the, 254
 Bustard, Little, 51; at Eastbourne, 110
 Butcher-bird, "Wariangle" and "Nyn-murder" names for, 300
 Butterfly, on a supposed polymorphic, from India, 224
 Buzzard, Common, 49
 " Rough-legged, in Wiltshire, 143; near Blackburn, 488
Calidris arenaria, 204
 Cane-borers, note on, 450

- Carduelis spinus*, 166
Cat, Wild, in the West Highlands, 218; hunting the, 251; and other indigenous Mammals of Scotland, 251
Chaffinch, 179
Charadriidae, 182
Charadrius pluvialis, 167
Chiffchaff remaining in England during the winter, 144
Cod, large-headed, at the mouth of the Thames, 26
Colin, Virginian, in Norfolk, 26
Colymbus septentrionalis, 184
Cormorant, 212, 340; with white feathers in the tail, 366
'Cornwall and the Scilly Islands, Birds of' (review), 374
Corvus corax, 126
 " *cornix*, 181
 " *frugilegus*, 166, 181
 " *monedula*, 181
Crab, Masked, unusual assemblage of the, 262
 " Northern Stone, 72
Crake, Corn, 198; carrying its young, 111
 " Spotted, at Leiston, 68
'Crayfish, the; an Introduction to the Study of Zoology' (review), 153
Crex pratinensis, 198
Crossbill breeding near York, 403, 515
Crow, Hooded, 181
Crustacea from the Greenland Seas, 27
Cuckoo, 182; blue eggs of, 361, 400; note on, 400; average date of arrival in England, 447
Cuckoos denuded of feathers, 257, 298
Cuckoos' eggs, colour of, 399
Cuculus canorus, 182
Curlew, 167, 183, 197; in Oxfordshire, 142
 " Esquimaux, in Kincardineshire, 485, 516
Cypselus apus, 163, 182

Daw, 181
Deal-fish on the Norfolk coast, 15
Deer, domestication of, 442
'Deer Stalking, a Handbook of' (review), 412
Delphinus albirostris, 220
Desfontaine's 'Birds of Barbary' (review), 375; note on, 405
'Dictionary, International, for Naturalists and Sportsmen' (review), 40
Dipper returning to its old nest, 406, 448
Diver, Black-throated, 53
 " Great Northern, 337
 " Red-throated, 53, 184, 340
Dogges, English, the diversities, the names, the natures, and the properties' (review), 413
Dolphin, White-beaked, 420
Dove, Turtle, breeding near York, 405
Doves, Stock, breeding in Magpies' nests, 143

Duck, Eider, 199, 213, 340
 " Golden-eye, in Norfolk in July, 404
 " King, 213; at the Farne Islands, 514
 " Long-tailed, 212, 339
 " Pintail, 337
 " Tufted, breeding in Nottinghamshire, 141
 " Wild, 199
Ducks, 169

Earthworms, spread of disease by the agency of, 409
Eggs of the Curlew Sandpiper, reported discovery of the, 104; in a Thrush's nest, unusual number of, 259; of Waterhen, unusual nest of, 299; blue, of Cuckoo, 361, 400; Great Auks', sale of, 365; Cuckoos', colour of, 399
Entomological Society of London, proceedings of, 31, 120, 227, 265, 307, 450, 489, 519
Epping Forest and County of Essex Naturalists' Field Club, 72, 151
Erythaea rubecula, 164
Erythrinus, Couch's, on the Cornwall coast, 449

Falco candicans, 121
Falcon, Greenland, 121; in Co. Donegal, 406
Falcon, Peregrine, 49; near Windsor, 70; in Hampshire, 141; in Oxfordshire, 142; in Bedfordshire, 221
Falconidae, 287
Falcons, long-winged, 289
 " Peregrine, on Salisbury Cathedral spire, 300
Fauna of Ireland, a German view of the, 293, 343, 388; of Belfast Lough, 305
Fauna of Norfolk, observations on the, and more particularly on the District of the Broads' (review), 33
Fauna of Scotland, the; with special reference to Clydesdale and the Western District' (review), 157
Feathers, Cuckoos denuded of, 257, 298; birds', coming off in winter, 298; white, in tail of Cormorant, 366
Ferret and Polecat, 396
Fieldfare, 174, 192
Fieldfares, scarcity of, 71
Field notes on the Reed and Marsh Warblers, 377
Finches, 194
Fish, on the air-bladders of, 97
Fishes, fresh-water, of India, notes on, 431, 461
 " sea, food of, 304
Flamborough, the cliffs at, 365
Flycatcher, 174
 " Pied, at the Lizard, 448
Flying-fish, flight of the, 471
Food of sea-fishes, 304

CONTENTS.

xi

- Fratercula arctica.** 211
Fringilla cœlebs. 179
Fulmars, Skuas, &c., 340
- Gadwall,** 53
Gallinago media, 183
 " scolopacina, 168
- 'Gamekeeper, the, at Home: Sketches of Natural History and Rural Life' (review), 36
- Gannet** at Llanberis, 363
 " breeding in confinement, 363
- Geese, Grey,** 168
 " Wild, 198
- Glasgow Natural History Society, proceedings of,** 269
- Goldcrest,** 164, 191
- Goosander** on the Exe, 68; in the West of England, 144
- Goose, Bernicle,** 168, 337
 " Brent, 214
 " Egyptian, 52
 " Grey-lag, 336
 " Solan, 200
- Grebe, Great Crested,** 337, 339; near Leeds, 514
 " Selavonian, 337
- Greenfinch,** 50
- 'Guide to the Botany, Ornithology, and Geology of Shrewsbury and its Vicinity' (review), 158
- Guillemot,** 169; call-note of young, 402
 " Black, 211, 339
 " Brunnich's, 211
- Gull, Black-headed,** early assumption of summer plumage in the, 106; young of, 337
 " Glaucous, 207, 340
 " Greater Black-backed, 206
 " Iceland, 207; and other sea-birds in West Cumberland, 221
 " Ivory, 206; young of, 484
 " Little, 71, 339
- Gulls** ejecting pellets, 362
 " Sea, 200
 " Skua, and their recent migration, 90
- Habits of the Stoat,** 54; of the Kentish Plover, 138
- Hæmatopus ostralegus,** 197
- Hare,** curious accident to a, 56
- Harelda glacialis,** 212
- Harrier, Hen,** in London, 108
 " Montagu's, nesting near York, 362; nesting of, 404, 445, 512
- Hawfinch,** 50, 336; breeding near Leeds, 404
- Hawk,** 190
 " Hawking in Norfolk, 33
- Hawks and hawking (with plates),** 273
- Hedgesparrow,** 192
- Heron,** 167, 197
 " Night, 52
- Heron, Purple,** 52
Heronries in Ireland, 514
Herons nesting at Hempstead, Norfolk, 366
- Hirundo rustica,** 163, 182, 190
 " urbica, 163, 191
- Hobby** nesting in Essex, 259
- Hoopoe,** 50, 338; near Basingstoke, 298; near Chichester, 299
- Hoopoes** in Sussex and Kent, 299
- Houting** on the Sussex coast, 146
- Hunting the Wild Cat,** 251
- Immigration of Long-eared Owls in Wiltshire,** 106; in Sussex, 140
- India, fresh-water fishes of,** 431
- Insects destroyed by flowers,** 265
- 'Insects, Injurious, Notes of Observations of' (review), 272
- Jays,** unusual migration of, 71
- King Eider,** 213; at the Farne Islands, 514
- Kittiwake,** 200, 207
- Knot,** 205
- Lagopus rupestris.** 126
- Lapwing,** 167, 196
- Lark,** 195
 " Crested, in Cornwall, 302
 " Shore, 177
 " Sky, 166, 177
- Larks, Shore,** 339, 340, 341; near Brighton, 488
 " Sky, *versus* Starlings, 403
- Larus glaucus,** 207
 " leucopterus, 207
 " marinus, 206
- Lerwick,** natural history notes from, 302
- Linnean Society of London, proceedings of,** 27, 74, 115, 149, 223, 263, 367, 516
- Linnet,** 179, 195
- Linota cannabina,** 179
 " flavirostris, 179
- Lizard, Common,** on the period and intervals at which it casts its skin, 408
- Mackarel,** early arrival of on the Cornish coast, 112; Porpoises chasing, 443
- Magpie,** 336; three-legged, 71
- Magpies' nests,** Stock Doves breeding in, 143
- Maigre, or Shade-fish,** off the Devonshire coast, 449
- Mammals and birds from Port Leopold,** 482
- Marten, Pine,** in Ireland, 18; in Cumberland, 219; recent occurrence of in Lincolnshire, 237
- Martin,** 163, 191
- Martins, House,** tenacity of life in young, 401

CONTENTS.

- Martins in December, 72
 Merganser, Red-breasted, 200
Mergus alle, 212
 Migrants, departure of, as observed in the vicinity of Norwich and Cromer, 338; raptorial, 341
 Migration of Woodcocks and Snipe, 65; unusual, of Jays, 71; recent, of Skua Gulls, 90; of birds in the autumn of 1879, report on the, 161; of Redbreast, 363; autumnal, 485; on the East coast of England in the autumn of 1880, 486; autumn, of birds at Cromer, 510
 Migratory waders, 341
Mormon fratercula, 169
 "Mormonidés, Recherches sur la Mue du Bec des Oiseaux de la famille des" (review), 270
 Mouse, Harvest, in Suffolk, 57
 Mullet, Lesser Grey, on the Northumberland coast, 448
Muscicapa grisola, 174
 Names for the Butcher-bird: "Nynmurder" and "Wariangle," 300; popular, of animals, 113
 "Nature cared for and Nature uncared for; a Lecture on Ornithology" (review), 80
 Nest, two species of birds laying in the same, 59; of Thrush, unusual number of eggs in, 259; of eggs of Waterhen, unusual, 299
 Nesting community, a strange, 301
 Nests, Magpies', Stock Doves breeding in, 143
 Nesting of the Nuthatch as observed in Norfolk, 41; of the Woodcock, 63; late, of the Barn Owl and Waterhen in Norfolk, 71; of the Common Wren, 142; of Siskin in Bedfordshire, 259, 364; of Hobby in Essex, 259; of Woodcock in Lancashire, 302; of Montagu's Harrier near York, 362; habits of the Starling, 366; of Herons at Hempstead, Norfolk, 366; of Montagu's Harrier, 404, 445, 512; late, of Nightjar, 405; of Nightingale in East Yorkshire, 406
 Nesting-place of the Wheatear, unusual, 301
 Nidification of Reed Warbler, 444
 Nightingale, nesting of in East Yorkshire, 406
 Nightjar, late nesting of, 406
 Norfolk, Fauna of, and of the Broad district, 33
 Nottinghamshire Birds, 374
Numenius arquatus, 167, 183
 "phaeopus", 197
 Nuthatch, nesting of the, as observed in Norfolk, 41
 Quar-fish, Banks', near Whitby, 145
 Ophiurid, on a Synthetic Type of, from the North Atlantic, 29
 Ornithological notes from Devon and Cornwall, 46, 247; from Guernsey, 360; from Lowestoft, 22; from Norfolk for 1878 and 1879, 325, 408; from Norfolk and Suffolk, 49; from North Lancashire, 241; from North Lincolnshire in the autumn of 1879, 6; from Orkney, 297; from S.W. Sutherland, 502; from the County Mayo, 129; from the Isle of Wight, 109; from West Cumberland, 106; from Yorkshire, 353
 "Ornithologia Bercheria," Dr. Lamb's, 313
 "Ornithologia Britannica," Tunstall's, 159
Otocoris alpestris, 176
 Ouzel, Ring, 165, 174, 339
 Owl, 190
 "Barn, 49; late nesting of in Norfolk, 71
 "Long-eared, does it hoot? 487
 "Tawny, supposed occurrence of in Ireland, 254
 "Tengmalm's, in Lincolnshire, 511
 Owls, Long-eared, immigration of in Wiltshire, 106; in Sussex, 140; in Guernsey, 220
 "White, cry of, 446
 "White and Brown, cry of, and song of the Redwing, 379
 Oystercatcher, 197
agophila eburnea, 206
 Parrot performing a surgical operation on living sheep, 57
 Partridge, Red-legged, in Guernsey, 257, 397
Passer domesticus, 180
 "montanus", 179
 Peewit, 51
 Pellets, Gulls ejecting, 362
 Petrel, 169
 "Fulmar, 71, 210, 340
 "Storm, 199, 210
Phalacrocorax carbo, 212
 Phalarope, Grey, 340; in Lincolnshire, 511; near Kingsbridge, Devon, 515
 "Red-necked, 204
Phalaropus hyperboreus, 204
Picus (major?), 166
 Pilchards, late stay of on the Cornish coast, 112
Plectrophanes lapponica, 126
 "nivalis", 124, 178
 Plover, 167, 196
 "Kentish, 51; habits of the, 138
 "Norfolk, 51
 Pochard breeding in Ireland, 255; at Surlingham, 339
 Polar Expedition, notes on the Ornithology of the British, 121, 204
 Polecat near Leeds, 251; and Ferret, 396; in North Oxfordshire, 508

- Polyzoa, British Marine, a History of' (review), 308
- Popular names of animals, 113
- Porphyrio, Green-backed, 339
- Porpoises chasing Mackarel, 443
- Procellaria glacialis, 210
 " pelagica, 210
- Procellariidae, 185
- Ptarmigan, Rock, 126, 214
- Pteropods obtained in Ross-shire, 28
- Puffin, 169, 211, 338
- Puffinus major, 210
- Rabbits in New Zealand, enforced destruction of, 442
- Rail, Water, 168, 337
- Rallus aquaticus, 168
- Raptorial migrants, 341
- Raven, 126; in the West of England, 144
- Ray, Eagle, off Plymouth, 262
- Razorbill, 212; call-note of the young, 402
- Redbreast, 175; migration of, 363
- Redstart, Black, in Co. Waterford, 221; near Yarmouth, 340
- Redwing, 50, 174; song of, and the cry of the White and Brown Owls, 379
- Regulus cristatus, 164, 191
- Rissa tridactyla, 200, 207
- Robin, 164, 191
- Rodd, Edward Hearle, 'The Birds of Cornwall and the Scilly Islands' (review), 374
- Rodd, the late Mr. Edward Hearle, 113
- Rook, 166, 181
- Rookeries in London, 515
- Rooks in the Temple Gardens, 143
- Salmon disease, 260
- Salmonidae, the origin of varieties in, 133
- Sanderling, 204
- Sandpiper, 167, 197.
 " Bartram's, in Lincolnshire, 508
 " Curlew, reported discovery of the eggs of the, 104
- Sandpiper, Green, in Norfolk, in July, 404
- Saxicola oenanthe, 124, 164
- Scaup, supposed breeding of in Ireland, 142, 255
- Scolopax rusticola, 167, 183
- Seemor punctatus on the Cornish coast, 303
- Scoter, Common, in Cambridgeshire, 258
- 'Scotland, Fauna of' (review), 157
- Sea-fowl, 199
- Seal, Great Grey, in Killala Bay, Co. Mayo, 358
- Shade-fish, or Maigre, off the Devonshire coast, 449
- Shearwater, Arctic, 210
 " Great, its position while at rest, 110
 " Manx, inland, 144
- Shearwaters, 71
- Sheep, living, Parrot performing a surgical operation on, 57
- Sheldrake, 199
- Shoveller, 333; breeding in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, 406
- Shrewsbury, Botany, Ornithology, and Geology of' (review), 158
- Shrike, Great Grey, singing powers of, 70; in the West of England, 144
- Shrike, Red-backed, subcutaneous worms in, 487
- Siskin, 166; nesting in Bedfordshire, 259, 364
- Siskins breeding in confinement, 61
- Skua, Buffon's, 208, 365
 " Great, at Brighton, 143
 " Pomatorhine, 207; on the Durham and Yorkshire coasts, 511
 " Richardson's, 207
- Skuas and some other birds observed in the Shetland Islands, 1; extraordinary arrival of on the Yorkshire coast, 18; in Yorkshire, 21; off the coasts of Devon and Cornwall, 21; Fulmars, &c., 340
 " Pomatorhine, in Somersetshire, 19; in the Bristol Channel, 20; and other birds in Bedfordshire, 108
- Slug, Shell, in Sussex, 367
- Smew, 340
- Snipe, 168, 183, 197; and Woodcocks, migration of, 65
 " Common, large russet variety of, 23
 " Solitary, in Northamptonshire, 444
- Somateria mollissima, 213
 " spectabilis, 213
- Sounds, animal, 54
- Sparrow, House, 186
 " Tree, 179
- Spoonbill in Cornwall, 513; the trachea of the, 488, 514
- Spoonbills, a visit to the colony of, near Amsterdam, 457
- Spiralis retroversus, 28
- Starfish, Knotty Cushion, 72
- Starling, 50, 166, 180, 194; variety of, 221; nesting habits of, 366
- Starlings *versus* Sky Larks, 403
- Stereorarius catarrhaetus, 169
 " crepidatus, 207
 " parasiticus, 208
 " pomatorhinus, 207
- Sterna hirundo, 206
- Stilt, Black-winged, near Eastbourne, 300
- Stint, Temminck's, 52
- Stoat, habits of the, 54
- Stoats, white, 104
- Strepsilas interpres, 128, 197
- Sturnus vulgaris, 166, 180
- Sula bassana, 200
- Swallow, 163, 182, 190
- Swallows, white, a brood of, 24; the departing, 448

- Swan, American, in Scotland, 111
 " Bewick's, in Norfolk, 139, 336, 337
 " Polish, 52
 " Wild, 199
 Swans, 169
 Swift, 163, 182
 " Alpine, in Devonshire, 108; in Yorkshire, 437
 " Needle-tailed, occurrence of the, for the second time in England (with plate), 81
 Tadorna vulpanser, 199
 Teal, American Green-winged, in Devon, 70; in Hampshire, 70
 Tern, 200
 " Arctic, 206
 " Black, 53
 " Gull-billed, 53
 Tern, Lesser, breeding on the Wicklow coast, 26
 Testacella haliotidea in Sussex, 222
 Thalassidroma pelagica, 169
 Three-legged Magpie, 71
 Thrush, 192
 " Song, 164, 174
 " White's, near Whitby, 68
 Thrush's nest, unusual number of eggs in, 259
 Titlark, 176
 Titmice, 164, 176, 192
 Titmouse, Blue, singular death of a, 144
 Topknot, Eckstrom's, on the Cornwall coast, 449
 Tortoises, extinct Land, of Mauritius and Rodriguez, 27
 Trachea of the Spoonbill, 488, 514
 Trachypterus arcticus? 15
 Tringa canutus, 205
 'Trochilidae, a Classification and Synopsis of the' (review), 370
 Troglodytes europaeus, 164
 Trout, in the Thames, 146
 Tunny, Short-finned, at Penzance, 366
 Tunstall's 'Ornithologia Britannica: a Catalogue of British Land and Water Birds (review), 159
 Turbot, growth of the, and change of colour in the Boar-fish, 383
 Turdus merula, 165
 " musicus, 164
 " torquatus, 165
 Turnstone, 52, 128, 197
 Twite, 50, 179
 Uria grylle, 211
 " troile, 169
 Vanellus cristatus, 167
 Varieties in Salmonidæ, the origin of, 133; of common birds, 516
 Variety, large russet, of the Common Snipe, 23; white, of Swallows, 24; of the Starling, 221; of Pied Wagtail, 341
 Waders, migratory, 341
 Wagtail, Pied, variety of, 341
 Wagtails gregarious at roosting time, 107
 Warbler, Reed, nidification of, 444
 Warblers, Reed and Marsh, field notes on, 377
 Wasp, Ants, and Bees, observations on, 410
 Waterfowl, acclimatisation of, 359
 Waterhen, late nesting of in Norfolk, 71; unusual nest of eggs of, 299
 Waxwing, 50
 Wheatear, 124, 164, 176, 192; unusual nesting-place of, 301
 Whimbrel, 197
 Whinchat in Cornwall, 407
 Whitethroat, 175
 Whiting and Whiting-pout, 304
 Widgeon, 199; early arrival of in the Moy Estuary, 448
 Wild Birds Protection Act (1880), 437
 Wildfowl, 337; at Larne, Co. Antrim, 107
 'Wildfowling, Modern' (review), 491
 Woodcock, 167, 183, 198; nesting of the, 63; carrying its young, 65, 258; breeding in Hampshire, 301; nesting in Lancashire, 302
 Woodcocks and Snipe, migration of, 65
 " remaining to breed, 338
 Woodpecker, 166, 336
 " Greater Spotted, decrease in Scotland of the, 85
 " Green, unusual abundance of in Somersetshire, 140, 221, 256
 " Lesser Spotted, 50, 336, 339, 340
 " Spotted, near Banbury, 447
 Worms, subcutaneous, in Red-backed Shrike, 487; in Peregrine Falcon, 515
 Wren, 164, 175, 191
 " Common, nesting of the, 142
 " Golden-crested, 176
 Yarrell, William, V.-P.L.S., F.Z.S. (the late), 'A History of British Birds' (review), 415
 Yellowhammer, 195
 Zoological Society of London, proceedings of, 29, 75, 118, 150, 226, 263, 305, 517; 'List of Animals in the Gardens,' 160

EXPLANATION OF PLATES.

PLATE 1.

(FRONTISPICE.)

THE NEEDLE-TAILED SWIFT, *Acanthyllis caudacuta*.

PLATE 2.

(To face page 273.)

THE PEREGRINE FALCON, *Falco peregrinus*, showing the arrangement of feathers on the upper and under sides of the wing.

Head of same.

Closed wing of same.

PLATE 3.

(To face page 289.)

THE GOSHAWK, *Astur palumbarius*, showing the arrangement of feathers on the upper and under sides of the wing.

Closed wing of same.

Foot of same.

